

## Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Portal*

On behalf of the Executive Editorial Committee of *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, it is a great pleasure to announce the virtual birth of this fully peer-reviewed journal under the auspices of UTSePress, the exciting new electronic publishing enterprise housed at the central library at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Australia. *Portal* itself is edited by staff from the Institute for International Studies, a dynamic research and teaching centre at UTS.

The launch of *Portal's* inaugural issue will take place simultaneously in Sydney, Australia, and Guadalajara, México, on January 28 (Sydney) / 27 (Guadalajara) 2004. The trans-Pacific axial enabling this twin launch is emblematic of the many axes of dialogue that, it is to be hoped, will characterize the content and reception of this and future issues of *Portal*. We are grateful to the many people at the Center for Social Sciences and Humanities at la Universidad de Guadalajara, México, for their provision of the technologies and tequila that will facilitate *Portal's* digital launch in a different space and timezone to its 'homebirth' in Sydney, Australia.

As *Portal's* 'Focus and Scope' statement indicates, the journal is dedicated to publishing scholarship by practitioners of-and dissenters from-international, regional, area, migration, and ethnic studies. *Portal* is also committed to providing a space for cultural producers interested in the internationalization of cultures. With these aims in mind we have conceived *Portal* as a "multidisciplinary venture," to use Michel Chaouli's words. That is, *Portal* signifies "a place where researchers [and cultural producers] are exposed to different ways of posing questions and proffering answers, without creating out of their differing disciplinary languages a common theoretical or methodological pidgin" (2003, p. 57). Our hope is that scholars working in the humanities, social sciences, and potentially other disciplinary areas, will encounter in *Portal* a range of critical and creative scenarios about contemporary societies and cultures and their material and imaginative relation to processes of transnationalization, polyculturation, transmigration, globalization, and anti-globalization. Our use of scenario here is drawn from Néstor García Canclini, for whom the term designates "a place where a story is staged" (1995, p. 273). García Canclini's interest lies in comprehending the staging of stories at "the intercrossings on the borders between countries, in the fluid networks that interconnect towns, ethnic groups, and classes, ... the popular and the cultured, the national and the foreign" (1995, p. 273). Such stories indicate some of the many possible international scenarios that *Portal* will stage in the future.

A key to our ambitions for *Portal* is an editorial commitment to facilitating dialogue between international studies practitioners working anywhere in the world, and not simply or exclusively in the "North," "the West," or the "First World." This fundamental policy is reflected in our Editorial Board, with members drawn from respected academic and research institutions in many countries and continents. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to the many people across the globe who, site unseen, graciously agreed to support this publishing and intellectual endeavour by joining the Editorial Board and wholeheartedly endorsing the journal's editorial brief. *Portal's* commitment to fashioning a genuinely "international" studies rubric is also reflected in our willingness to accept critical and creative work in English as well as in a number of other languages: Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese,

Croatian, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, and Serbian. We anticipate that this list will grow. *Portal* is also committed to the timely and constructive provision of feedback to submitted work. There will be two issues per year: one in January, the other in July. These editorial protocols make *Portal* a uniquely "international" publishing venture.

Immense gratitude is due to the team at UTSePress for their dedication to, and faith in, this project. In particular, we would like to thank Alex Byrne, Fides Lawton, Richard Buggy, and Shannon Elbourne, for their hard work, support, and understanding. Thanks go to all the members of the *Portal* Editorial Committee for their contributions. Finally, special thanks to our Editorial Assistant Wayne Peake, Research Assistant John McPhillips and Editorial Committee member Kate Barclay who did so much to ensure the appearance of this inaugural issue.

Paul Allatson, Chair of Editorial Committee